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UNCLAS MUSCAT 000490

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI (TROBERTS), NEA/PPD (CWHITTLESEY), NEA/P
(FFINVER), INR/R/MR
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH
PARIS FOR ZEYA
USCENTCOM FOR PLUSH
FOREIGN PRESS CENTER/ASILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: SHARON AND PALESTINIAN COMMITMENTS,
AMERICAN AIRBASE IN LEBANON, AND DOHA BOMBING

Stopping the Violence

[1](#)1. On March 19, the government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" carried an editorial entitled, "Sharon's Dilemma is Growing":

"The Palestinian commitment to stop attacks against Israel -- provided Israel stops its hostile actions against the Palestinians -- has put real pressure on Sharon. The Israeli Prime Minister must commit to ending Israel's hostile actions and stop the continual cycle of Israeli excuses for its unfair actions."

Conspiracy Theory

[1](#)2. The privately-owned Arabic daily "al-Watan" published an editorial on March 21 entitled, "For the Airbase":

"The Arab media has ignored press reports from other regions on the reason behind the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri and its likely consequences. One electronic journal, "Journal Online" suggests that the real goal of the assassination is to create a crisis between Syria and Lebanon in order to force the Syrians to pull their troops out of Lebanon. This would clear the way for the U.S. to establish an airbase in the country. The journal speculates that the American administration would use the airbase as a center for communication and a forum from which to protect the oil pipelines in southern Iraq, the Caspian Sea, and the Turkish port of Jihan. According to the journal, a CIA source in Washington confirmed that the proposed base would be as important as any of the other U.S. bases in the Gulf."

Rejecting Terrorism

[1](#)3. On March 21, the government-owned Arabic daily "Oman" published an editorial entitled "The Condemnation of Terrorism":

"All forms of terrorism must be rejected. The international community should stand firm against this phenomenon that has taken root in Arab and Islamic communities despite our call for tolerance and forgiveness. The terrible attack in Doha was an immoral act. It has nothing to do with religion. The government of the Sultanate of Oman strongly condemned the attack, and its Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a statement affirming its support for Qatar."

BALTIMORE